



SAWFISH

Conservation in Bangladesh



A call to action

Sawfishes are globally threatened fishes; in Bangladesh they are listed on schedule I of the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, (2012) and on CITES Appendix I. The Sundarbans Reserve Forest (SRF) is one of the remaining globally important habitats for sawfishes. Sawfishes are especially vulnerable to being entangled in fishing gears, and there is a local belief amongst Bangladeshi coastal inhabitants that sawfish meat can cure cancer, creating a market for bycaught sawfishes. Our study recorded 25 sawfish landings between 15th October 2016 and 26th December 2017 from only four landings sites; the true total is likely much higher. This suggests that populations have not been depleted to the same extent as they have in other low-income countries. There is a unique opportunity to implement a sawfish conservation strategy in Bangladesh which addresses local threats with the aim of halting and reversing population declines, but immediate action is needed.

ACTION 1 SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

IMPACT:

Will help eliminate the belief that sawfish meat cures cancer and thus reduce local demand



OPPORTUNITY:

Collaboration with local organizations, locally active international NGOs, Fisheries Research Institute, Fisheries Development Corporation.

ACTION 2. DEVELOP SAWFISH LIVE RELEASE PROGRAMME

IMPACT:

Will mitigate by-catch pressure and mortality from coastal fisheries. Provides opportunities to fishers to become an integral part of conservation. Creates sense of stewardship



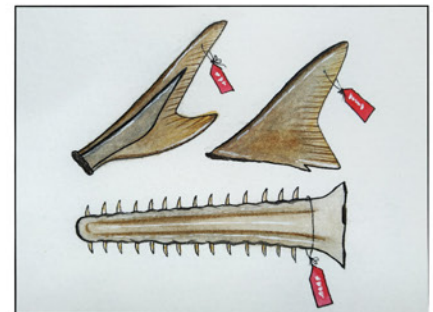
OPPORTUNITY:

Collaboration with already existing compensation schemes for coastal fishers by the Department of Fisheries (DoF). Conservation actions can be initiated by research universities and conservation organisations in conjunction with DoF and BFD.

ACTION 3 BETTER CONTROL TRADE IN SAWFISH PRODUCTS

IMPACT:

Will reduce fishers' desire to land sawfishes



OPPORTUNITY:

Better enforcement of trade restrictions could lead to reduced opportunities for sale of sawfish products.